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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to better understand students' reasons for withdrawing from Cerritos College, a follow-up postage-paid postcard questionnaire was sent to a sample of 1,027 students who had withdrawn between the first and tenth week of the Fall semester of 1972. Of the questionnaires, 34.3% were completed and returned. Analyses of the responses revealed that: (1) the student's financial needs and personal or health problems apparently compete most with his chances of continuing in college; (2) there appears to be concordance between reasons cited on the exit and follow-up questionnaires; thus, information gathered from the exit questionnaire may reflect the student's true feelings; (3) concerning the small proportion of discordant responses, it appears that "work interference" as a reason for withdrawing stated on the exit questionnaire may also reflect that "lack of interest," "personal or health problems," "courses not relevant to my goals," and "general feeling of not getting anywhere" may also play a part in the student's choice of seeking more financial support instead of continuing college; and (4) in reference to those who did not cite any reason on the exit questionnaire, the two most frequently cited reasons on the follow-up questionnaire were "to become employed," and "personal or health problems." (Author/DB)

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FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF STUDENTS WITHDRAWING FROM CERRITOS COLLEGE DURING THE FALL SEMESTER, 1972

Office of
Institutional Research
Cerritos College
June, 1973

by

Gary F. Schaumburg,
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JC 730 134

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ABSTRACT

Follow-Up Survey of Students Withdrawing From
Cerritos College During the Fall Semester, 1972

Students upon withdrawing from Cerritos College are asked to fill out an exit questionnaire which in turn is filed in the counseling office. Due to the lack of personal anonymity in filling out the questionnaire it has been generally felt that the information gathered from this questionnaire may not fully reflect the true feelings of the student. Therefore, an attempt to gain a better understanding of student reasons for withdrawing a follow-up questionnaire was employed in such a manner that the respondee could remain anonymous. A sample of 1,027 students were identified as having withdrawn between the first and tenth week of the Fall semester, 1972. A postage-paid postcard questionnaire was sent to each of the students identified; 34.3% were completed and returned. Analyses of the responses on the follow-up questionnaire revealed that: (1) apparently the student's financial needs and personal or health problems compete most with his chances of continuing his college education; (2) there appears to be concordance between reasons cited on the exit and follow-up questionnaires, thus information gathered from the exit questionnaire may reflect the true feelings of the student; (3) concerning the small proportion of discordant responses, it appears that "Work interference" cited as a reason for withdrawing on the exit questionnaire may also reflect that "Lack of interest", "Personal or health problems", "Courses not relevant to my goals" and "General feeling of not getting anywhere" may also play a part in the students choice of seeking more financial support instead of continuing education and;

(4) in reference to those who did not cite any reason on the exit questionnaire, the two most frequently cited reasons on the follow-up questionnaire were "To become employed" and, "Personal or health problems".

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of the present survey was to further study the reasons why students withdraw from Cerritos College.

Presently students upon withdrawing are asked to fill out an exit questionnaire which in turn is filed in the counseling office. Due to the lack of personal anonymity in filling out the questionnaire it has been generally felt that the information gathered from this questionnaire may not fully reflect the true feelings of the student. Therefore, in an attempt to gain a better understanding of student reasons for withdrawing a follow-up questionnaire was employed in such a manner that the respondee could remain anonymous.

In order to carryout the study a sample of students who had previously withdrawn from the college had to be identified. Through the assistance of the college computer center, 1,027 students were identified as having withdrawn between the first and tenth week of the Fall semester, 1972.

A postage-paid postcard questionnaire was sent to each of the students identified. Of the 1,027 surveys mailed 52 or 5.0% did not reach the individuals for which intended and were returned by the post office. Of the remaining 975 questionnaires 335 or 34.3% were completed and returned by the recipients.

RESULTS

In response to the statement, "Our records show that you attended Cerritos this Fall but are presently not attending and have withdrawn from college. We are sincerely interested in learning why you did not continue to attend and would appreciate your feelings in regard to the possible reasons listed below:" the reason most oftened cited was "To become employed". Following in rank order were: "Personal or health problems"; "Work interference"; "Courses not relevant to goals"; "Financial problems"; "Class wanted was cancelled"; "To attend another college"; "Lack of interest"; "Moved"; "Drafted or joined service"; "Still enrolled at Cerritos College"; "General feelings of not getting anywhere"; "Had unrealistic expectations"; "Found class was not what I needed"; "Conflict with High School work"; "Out of district and was dropped"; "To become married"; "No transportation"; "Poor grades"; "Auditioned for orchestra but was not accepted"; "Too much problem parking". See Table 1.

Comparing the exit questionnaire responses with those of the follow-up questionnaire, concerning reasons for withdrawing, it was found that twenty-nine (29) or 8.6% of the 335 responses were discordant (see Table 2). In reference to Table 2 one observes that eighteen (18) individuals who listed "Work interference" on the exit questionnaire as the reason for withdrawing responded differently on the follow-up questionnaire. Eight (8) or 44.4% of the eighteen (18) checked "Lack of interest"; two (2) or 11.1% "Personal or health problems"; seven (7) or 38.8% "Course not relevant to my goals" and; one (1) or 5.5% "General feeling of not getting anywhere".

In addition two (2) individuals who cited "Full high school schedule" as the reason on the exit questionnaire checked "Courses not relevant to my

Table 1

Rank Order of Responses to the Statement: "Our records show that you attended Cerritos College this fall but are presently not attending and have withdrawn from college. We are sincerely interested in learning why you did not continue to attend and would appreciate your feelings in regard to the possible reasons listed below"

Rank		Frequency of Responses	Percent of total Responses
1	To become employed	61	18.2%
2	Personal or health problems	55	16.4%
3	Work interference	44	13.1%
4	Courses not relevant to goals	31	9.3%
5	Financial problems	27	8.1%
6	Class wanted was cancelled	22	6.6%
7	To attend another college	17	5.1%
"	Lack of interest	17	5.1%
8	Moved	15	4.5%
9	Drafted or joined service	10	2.9%
10	Still enrolled in Cerritos College	8	2.3%
11	General feeling of not getting anywhere	7	2.1%
12	Had unrealistic expectations	4	1.2%
12	Found class was not what I needed	4	1.2%
13	Conflict with high school work	3	0.9%
14	Out of district and was dropped	2	0.6%
"	To become married	2	0.6%
"	No transportation	2	0.6%
"	Poor grades	2	0.6%
15	Auditioned for orchestra but was not accepted	1	0.3%
"	Too much problem parking	1	0.3%
		335	100.0%

Table 2

Comparison of Exit Questionnaire
And Follow-Up Survey Responses

Exit Questionnaire Response	Follow-Up Survey Response	Number and Percent Responding
"Work Interference"	"Lack of interest"	8 or 44.4%
"	"Personal or health problems"	2 or 11.1%
"	"Courses not relevant to my goals"	7 or 38.9%
"	"General feeling of not getting anywhere"	1 or 5.6%
		18 or 100.0%

Table 3

Comparison of Exit Questionnaire And
Follow-Up Survey Responses

Exit Questionnaire Response	Follow-Up Survey Response	Number and Percent Responding
"Full high school schedule"	"General feeling of not getting anywhere"	1 or 11.1%
"	"Courses not relevant to my goals"	1 or 11.1%
"Moving out of district"	"Courses not relevant to my goals"	4 or 44.4%
"Personal"	"General feeling of not getting anywhere"	2 or 22.2%
"Scared"	"Courses not relevant to my goals"	1 or 11.1%
		9 or 100.0%

goals" and "General feeling of not getting anywhere" on the follow-up questionnaire. Also, six (6) withdrawals who initially gave "Moving out of district" as a reason changed to "Courses not relevant to my goals". Likewise, two (2) individuals who first cited "Personal" as their reason changed to "General feeling of not getting anywhere", and one (1) who listed "Scared" on the exit questionnaire changed to "Courses not relevant to my goals". See Table 3.

Furthermore, it was found that twenty (20) or 5.9% of the 335 respondees had not listed any reason for withdrawing on the exit questionnaire. However, they gave the following reasons in response to the follow-up questionnaire (see Table 3). Seven (7) or 35% "To become employed"; one (1) or 5% "Lack of interest"; three (3) or 15% "Personal or health problems"; two (2) or 10% "Courses not relevant to my goals"; one (1) or 5% "Too much unnecessary rigamarole"; two (2) or 10% "Could not get in the course I wanted"; one (1) 5% "Course I wanted was not offered"; one (1) or 5% "Dropped out to re-enter on Vets eligibility"; one (1) or 5% "Missed too many classes"; and one (1) or 5% "Work interference". See Table 4.

Table 4

Comparison of Exit Questionnaire
And Follow-Up Survey Responses

Exit Questionnaire Response	Follow-Up Survey Response	Number and Percent Responding
No reason given	"To become employed"	7 or 35.0%
"	"Lack of interest"	1 or 5.0%
"	"Work interference"	1 or 5.0%
"	"Personal or health problems"	3 or 15.0%
"	"Courses not relevant to my goals"	2 or 10.0%
"	"Could not get in the course I wanted"	2 or 10.0%
"	"Course wanted was not offered"	1 or 5.0%
"	"Dropped out to re-enter on Vets eligibility"	1 or 5.0%
"	"Missed too many classes"	1 or 5.0%
"	"Too much unnecessary rigamarole"	1 or 5.0%
		20 or 100.0%

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Concerning the follow-up questionnaire, four frequently cited reasons for withdrawing were "To become employed" (18.2%), "Personal or health problems" (16.4%), "Work interference" (13.1%), and "Financial problems" (8.1%). Thus it appears that the students financial needs and personal or health problems compete most with his chances of continuing his college education.

2. There appears to be concordance between reasons cited on the exit and follow-up questionnaires. Therefore, for the most part, information gathered from the exit questionnaire concerning reasons for withdrawing may reflect the true feelings of the student.

3. Concerning the small proportion of discordant responses, it appears that "Work interference" cited as a reason for withdrawing on the exit questionnaire may also reflect that "Lack of interest", "Personal or health problems", "Courses not relevant to my goals" and "General feeling of not getting anywhere" may also play a part in the students choice of seeking more financial support instead of continuing education.

4. In reference to those who did not cite any reason on the exit questionnaire, the two most frequently cited reasons on the follow-up questionnaire were "To become employed" (35.0%) and, "Personal or health problems" (15.0%).

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